

Application No. 09/817,730
Amendment dated November 7, 2005
Reply to Office Action of July 19, 2005

Docket No. 4112-4001

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this application in view of the foregoing amendment and following remarks.

Status of the Claims

Claims 1-63 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 22 and 43 are independent. All of the pending claims stand rejected. By this Amendment, independent claims 1, 22 and 43 are amended. Dependent claims 7, 20, 21, 28, 41, 42, 49, 62 and 63 are also amended. New claims 64-66 are added. No new matter has been added by this Amendment.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §101

Claims 1-22 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101 as having non-statutory subject matter. The Examiner indicates that "[t]he invention in the body of the claim must recite technology."

Claim 1 has been amended for further clarification. In particular, amended claim 1 as shown above recites "a system on a computer network" indicating that the steps in the body of the claim are performed in a computer network environment such as the Internet. Amended claim 1 further recites additional steps that can result in a useful, concrete and tangible result (e.g., technology transfer).

Accordingly, Applicant believes that amended claim 1, and claims dependent therefrom (i.e., claims 2-22) are within the statutory subject matter.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1-22 under 35 U.S.C. §101 is respectfully requested.

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Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claims 1-6, 9, 12, 16, 18, 22-27, 30, 33, 37, 39, 43-48, 51, 54, 58 and 60 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,884,272 to Walker et al. ("Walker"). The Examiner cites portions of Walker such as col. 4, lines 19-27 and lines 28-32, col. 5, lines 7-11 and lines 11-16, and the step 510 of Fig. 5, as disclosing the present invention.

Walker is directed to a method/system for establishing anonymous communications between parties and facilitating information exchange between the parties without revealing their identity. Walker exemplifies a recruiting interview process between an employer and a candidate exchanging personal information. Walker's method/system includes a central controller 200 that organizes the anonymous communications between the terminals.

Referring to Fig. 5 of Walker, the central controller receives encrypted data from the plurality of parties and stores them in a database. Upon receiving a search request from one of the plurality of parties (i.e., a requestor), the central controller performs a search to find a party that meets the requestor's interest and presents the search result to the requestor. Upon receiving an agreement from both parties, the central controller establishes an anonymous communication channel by stripping off the identities of both parties from the messages enabling both parties to communicate with each other WITHOUT disclosing their identity. See, also, Fig. 9 and relevant portion of the specification, e.g., col. 19, line 62 - col. 20, line 8 of Walker.

Independent claims 1, 22 and 43 have been amended further clarifying that the claimed invention enables technology exchange between parties who ARE identified to each other. In particular, amended claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, "providing the first member access to a private

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area of a database enabling the first member to communicate confidential information,”
“providing the second member with a result of the comparing step which includes an
identification of the first member if the comparing step identifies at least one common
characteristic,” “delivering a request from the second member to the first member requesting a
direct communication with the first member wherein the request includes an identification of the
second member,” and “permitting an exchange of information between the first member and the
second member using the private area retained by the first member if the request from the first
member indicates that the first member agrees with the second member for the direct
communication.” Amended independent claims 22 and 43 recite similar features to amended
claim 1 as discussed herein. Support for the amendment may be found, for example, at page 13,
lines 12-18, page 15, lines 8-11 and page 18, line 16 - page 19, line 6 of the original specification.

The present invention is directed to a method/system that facilitates technology exchange
and collaboration between parties on a computer network environment such as the Internet. In
an embodiment, a first member (i.e., a supplier) registers with the system and completes a form
(i.e., a profile for a supplier) describing the technology that can be provided. A second member
(i.e., a buyer or contributor) also registers with the system and completes a form (i.e., a profile
for a buyer/contributor) describing the technology that the buyer/contributor wishes to have.
Based on the profiles, the system performs a search to find a match that may identify the first and
second members as a possible partner.

Subsequently, the system allows the buyer/contributor who has interest in the supplier's
technology to request a direct contact to the supplier intending further discussion. By placing a
request, the method/system requires the buyer/contributor to DISCLOSE its identity to the

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supplier (i.e., at this stage, the buyer/contributor does not know the supplier's identity). Upon receiving the request from the buyer/contributor, the supplier checks whether there exists any conflict in collaborating with the requesting buyer/contributor. If it is determined that no conflict exists, the supplier agrees to communicate directly with the buyer/contributor (i.e., at this stage, both the supplier and the buyer/contributor knows the identity of each other). The buyer/contributor may be invited to the supplier's private area of the database retained by the supplier where both parties can exchange confidential information regarding the technology.

One of the aspects of the present invention as featured in amended independent claims 1, 22 and 43 requires that the method/system provides the supplier with a secure area of the database upon registering where the supplier can store and communicate confidential information (e.g., presentation material for the technology). The method/system further requires the buyer/contributor to disclose its identity when the buyer/contributor requests a direct communication with the supplier enabling the supplier to review the qualification of the possible buyer/contributor. Additionally, the method/system permits an exchange of confidential information using the private area retained by the supplier, if both parties agree.

Applicant believes that Walker is different from the present invention in several aspects. First of all, Walker's system maintains anonymity even after both parties agree to exchange information. In contrast, the method/system of the present invention requires the buyer/contributor to disclose its identity to the supplier when the buyer/contributor requests a direct communication with the supplier that enables the supplier to review the qualification of the buyer/contributor before agreeing to the technology exchange. Secondly, there is no teaching in Walker that provides a first member with a private area upon registering. In contrast, the

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method/system of the present invention provides the private area to the supplier so that the supplier can invite the buyer/contributor to the private area where they can perform a secure communication upon agreeing.

Accordingly, Applicant believes that each of amended claims 1, 22 and 43 and their dependent claims are neither anticipated by nor rendered obvious in view of Walker for at least the reasons discussed above.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1-6, 9, 12, 16, 18, 22-27, 30, 33, 37, 39, 43-48, 51, 54, 58 and 60 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is respectfully requested.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Applicant has not individually addressed the rejections of the dependent claims because Applicant submits that the independent claims from which they respectively depend are in condition for allowance as set forth above. Applicant however reserves the right to specifically address such rejections of the dependent claims should such be necessary.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the secondary references cited by the Examiner, Herz (U.S. Patent No. 6,029,195), Tran (U.S. Patent No. 2001/0049707 A1), Takahashi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,049,787), Downer (Dictionary of Finance and Investment Terms) and O'Neil et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,987,440) are also different from the present invention in several aspects, including that they do not teach, disclose or suggest alone or in combination the method/system of the present invention which (i) requires the buyer/contributor to disclose its identity to the supplier when the buyer/contributor requests a direct communication with the supplier that enables the supplier to review the qualification of the buyer/contributor before agreeing to the technology exchange and (ii) provides a private area to the supplier so that the supplier can invite

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the buyer/contributor to the private area where they can perform a secure communication upon agreeing.

New Claims

Claims 64-66 have been added to recite the claimed invention in an alternative manner. Each of added claims 64-66 depends from independent claims 1, 22 and 43, respectively. Each of claims 64-66 is accordingly believed to be allowable over the cited art of records for at least the similar reasons as for the independent claims.

Applicant believes that the application as amended including the new claims is in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested.